

[Introduction to Big Fred Tells a Tall Tale]

Introduction to Big Fred Tells a Tall Tale by Wayne Walden

If you want to meet the man who used to "chase around with Paul Bunyon," take a walk to Union Square Park some evening. Standing over six feet tall in the center of a group of men, you'll spot Big Fred, old time lumberjack, longshoreman and Wobbly.

Join the group. You're welcome , stranger. Big Fred is talking now. This is Big Fred talking, men! Hold your hats, men!

"Paul wasn't a bad plug," says Fred. "he was all right in his time." The trouble with Bunyon, according to Fred, is that " he that he was never able to get rid of the crumbs."

"Tell us about it Fred."

"Sure," says Fred in his windy drawl.

The story's a rip-snorter, big-sized, colossal as they say in Hollywood. Of course you don't exactly believe it, but that's not important. You don't question the truth of a tornado, do you You don't have to believe it. All you have to do is listen. Big Fred, he tells them. You hold your hat! (Text to begin, "It was the Wobblies - etc." [A.M.?] Crumb story - good fact ride - no good Mr. Walden's addends - no good lw

TALES - TALL

WASHINGTON COMMENT:

Most pleased with this. Typed as tentative selection for American Folk Stuff.

FOLKLORE

Library of Congress

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Wayne Walden

ADDRESS 51 Bank St.

DATE September 16, 1938

SUBJECT Identity of interest [?][?][?] Big Fred Tell A Tall Tale

Big Fred and a several others were indulging in reminiscences of by-gone times. The talk was of the northwest logging camps, and Big Fred, a former lumberjack, was doing most of the talking. He despite Despite his years, seems still capable of bucking big logs, and more certain, possesses the faculty of telling tales the veracity of which may be questioned. # Fred claims that years ago he sometimes "chased around with Paul Bunyan" [?] that Paul "wasn't a bad plug " , but that modern phases of the lumber industry require more up-to-date methods." [?] "Paul Bunyan was alright in his time, but he didn't have the big shots of today to deal with, [md] and he never was able to get rid of the crumbs. It was the wobblies, and you got to give 'em credit for it, - that done anything [?] about the crumbs. " That was one of their big fights [??] [?] Bunyan's day, the camps wus crummy, the bunks wus crummy, and the men wus so used to being crummy , that they wouldn't of knowed what to do without 'em. After the wobs begun to have some say-so on the jobs they begun to holler for clean bedding, and that sort of put the skids under the crumbs - a lot of 'em anyway." # "A crumb is what you'd call a louse" said Big Fred, with a tone of pity, for one so ignorant as I seemed to be. "They was called 'cooties' by the soldiers during the war, but they're the same thing; we always called 'em crumbs. Anyhow, - as I was going to say - one time when one of the big shots come out to look things over,

Library of Congress

he stuck his head in one of the (Continued from C) FOLKLORE NEW YORK FORM D
Extra Comment STATE New York NAME OF WORKER Wayne Walden ADDRESS 51
bank Street DATE September 16, 1938 SUBJECT [Identity of interest? or Conspiracy
between the boss and crumbs?] "in one of the bunk- house doors. Before he could duck
back again he heard a bunch of voices yelling at him, 'Hello Brother'. It kind of puzzled
him. After awhile, when he sees seen that the crumbs were coming to meet him, and was
actually calling him their brother, the boss got mad. He figured that that was an insult to
his dignity, you see. # "What do you mean by calling me your brother ' , he says said to
them. " Well, we are - aint we " , they says. " We dont need no interpreter " , they says. " We
may be a little different lookin' on the outsides, but we got the same souls - aint we " they
says to him. " We get our livin' from the same sourse source , dont we, " they says. " It's
the blood of the guys you got workin' for you " , they [?] says. " You bleed 'em by day,
and we bleed 'em by night, " they says. " That makes you and us blood-brothers, " they
says to the boss. #" Yeah? " says the boss. #" Well, as you weaken 'em, and rob me 'em
of some of their energy, I'm going to kill you " , the boss says to the crumbs. " Alright, says
the crumbs - hop to it; but you'll lose the best ally you got, or ever had . ' ' How so? ' says
the boss. #' Well, ' , says the crumbs, ' aint it our gouging into the hides of your slaves
that keeps 'em so busy scratching they cant do any thinking? And as long as they can't
think ' , they says, " your slaves wont bother to organize " , they says. " They wont won't
demand any improvements ' , they says, and "And well, by that time, I was kind of tired
with their damned propaganda", [?] Fred says.